A

Short Vindication

OF

Marine Regiments.

In Answer to a Pamphlet, Entituled,

A Letter to a Member of Parliament, concerning the Four Marine Regiments.

LONDON,

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A Short Vindication OF Marine Regiments.

SInce Mankind are ſubjected to the Licentious Aſperſions of every Author who has an opinion of his railing, the only misfortune a man ſhould reſent as particular is when he falls into the worſt hands; That ſuch is the fate of the Mariners is evident from the ſcurrility, inconſiſtency, and falſity, ſo conſpicuous in every page of his Book.

The Gentleman undertakes, with that becoming aſſurance which ſhines thro the whole Piece, to prove theſe Regiments an uſeleſs charge to the People, a nuſance to the Navy, and dangerous to the Kingdoms Liberties.

This Indictment bears indeed a terrible Front, and were it not for this ſmall advantage on our ſide, that every ſort of proof from Reaſon and matter of Fact is wanting, we were in a deſperate condition.

Our Author without any heſitation aſſerts, that the Officers ſeldom do any duty; that they and their men are ſupernumerary, and uſeleſs to the Ships Company, and a very heavy charge: Whereas it is plain, that the Lords of the Admiralty, upon fitting out a Squadron of Ships, always direct their Orders to the Collonels of the Marine Regiments for a detachment of their men, with whom there conſtantly embarks a proportionable complement of Officers, who are diſpos'd of in numbers according to the rate of the Ship, and are always conſidered as a part of their Ships Complement; and as ſuch they are leſs charge than ſo many Seamen, the able Seaman's monthly Pay being Four and twenty ſhillings, and the Marines but Eighteen. And for being equally uſeful at leaſt, I have often heard it own'd by the Flag-Officers, as well as private Captains, they had rather have one fourth of their men Marines, than be wholly mann'd with Sea-men, for that they always found them more obedient to Command in time of Action, whether quartered at the Great Guns or Small Shot, or put Centrys over the Scuttels; whereas the Seamen at ſuch times are not ſo Governable, being accuſtomed to greater Liberties and Diſorders, from their frequent diſcharges and variety of Service, when the Marines are kept to a Conſtant and Severer diſcipline.

But here, to daſh all our hopes at once, he comes with Antipathy and Oeconomy, and is very merry with the different diſpoſitions of the Seamen and the Landmen, and aſſerts, 'tis impoſſible to be practis'd with ſafety, if the Nation ſhould conſent to it: One while he makes us Marines, and then again we are to be Land Soldiers; and indeed ſuch is his ingenuity, we are to be any thing his different purpoſes would have us; The

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only instance we are allow'd to know is, of a dissention in Sir *Francis Wheeler*'s Expedition in the *West Indies*; but that happen'd from a Regiment of Foot taken on board in the *West Indies*, nor can it, even with the art of our Author's inferences, fall on the Marines, the Sea Officers having an absolute Command over them, with power to confine upon refusing to obey.

The *Streights* Squadron, Commanded by my Lord *Orford*, and the Land Regiments upon that expedition, are happy instances of a better agreement; and 'tis rather to be hoped our continuing among them may put an entire end to that unnatural dissention, he draws such dangerous consequences from.

He urges in additional charge against us, we cannot be a Nursery for Seamen; Nay, that there is no occasion for any Nursery at all in a time of Peace and Security. But I hope his Opinion wanting every support but his own assurance, will not prevail against plain Matter of Fact, subject to other than notional demonstration; For as the Kings Ships in time of War, by indispensible necessity did often delay and prejudice the Trading part of the Kingdom; in times of Peace, the necessity will prevail on t'other side; and 'tis plain, that long and dangerous Voyages, by Distempers incident from several climates, and the infinite accidents such a course of Life exposes men to, will continually lessen the number, and soon awaken us with that necessity we look upon at such a distance: And that the Marines are a proper supply is undeniable; Had our Author been a little better acquainted with that Commissioner of the Navy, he makes such familiar mention of, the Navy Books would have made appear to them both, that even during the oppressions and disappointments

ments theſe Regiments labour'd under, great numbers of Seamen have been diſcharged from them as Able for the ſervice of the Navy: And had they been encourag'd and ſupported in their firſt Inſtitution, I am aſſured a thouſand men might have been Annually drawn from them ſo qualified.

Nay, theſe very Marines our Author looks upon as ſuch Cyphers, were found very ready, and very neceſſary, when the Invaſion was threatned from *Calais*; when without them, the difficulties had been inſuperable upon the Officers employ'd in the ſpeedy manning of the Fleet.

He charges us again, with a modeſty proper to him, that Seamen are inveigled by us to become Landmen, rather than our ſelves made uſeful at Sea; that we receive Forty Shillings *per* man, to Recruit and Liſt preſt men in our Companies.

The truth of this he makes out with his uſual plainneſs, in that one half of the Marines are conſtantly at Sea themſelves, and the reſt always ready to relieve them, or be put on board at an hours warning on any other expedition, and always account the Sea Service their proper place of Action and Duty. The Seamen have Twenty Four Shillings *per* month, and the Marines Eighteen Shillings, which muſt incline them to chooſe the Marine Service in point of Intereſt, and with their natural inclination to Land Men and Land Service, hinted by our Author, Page the 5th, make the Task very eaſy for Marine Officers to recruit their Companies with preſt Seamen; who muſt be preſt firſt by the Sea Officers, and actually in their Cuſtody, and they doubtleſs will be ready (by reaſon of the Antipathy before mention'd) to oblige the Marine Officers with the men preſt at their

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own trouble and expence; for no Marine Officer has more power to preſs than any Land Officer whatſoever.

I find, as buſy as this Gentleman makes himſelf, with that determining Port, ſtating his own Objections, then anſwering them as roundly; and ſetting his reaſons beyond the poſſibility of a reply, he is forced very often to diſcover his humanity, I mean his fallibility, and not his good nature, of that we muſt acquit him, the diſtempers of the State will not ſuffer by the lenity of our Reformer.

Here, if the ſubject were not too ſerious, I ſhould indeed be inclin'd to be merry; The Sailors, he ſays, are always depended upon better at their Small Arms, to defend the Decks, and annoy the Enemy, becauſe in their Voyages they are accuſtom'd to ſhoot Wild Fowl; and would infer, that to defend the Decks, and make regular Fires, to load and diſcharge with quickneſs, and order, preſerving themſelves carefully to advance and retire with that regard to command, as in Companies well diſciplined, may be learnt beſt by ſhooting of Larks; This is ſo very Ridiculous that I am in hopes the Gentleman will honour us with the firſt Fruits of his modeſty, and bluſh for it.

In Confidence of which I will venture to tell him, I have known, when the Sea Commanders have Complain'd, they could never bring one in Ten of the Sailors ſo much as to endeavour at the Exerciſe of the ſmall Arms, which makes the Neceſſity of the Mariners almoſt irreſiſtable.

I believe 'tis poſſible to prove one inſtance, that theſe Mariners have been Inſtrumental in preventing Mutinies attempted at Sea, and very many reaſons why they

may be uſeful that way, conſtant diſcipline leaving deeper impreſſions of Duty, and the higheſt regard to good Officers, and I am told that is the reaſon their Arms are always lodged in the aftermoſt part of the Ship.

As for his Inſtance upon thoſe Attacks at *Cork* and *Kingſale*, theſe very uſeleſs Mariners (unluckily to this Gentlemans purpoſe) had the Honor of a very conſiderable part in the Succeſs, ſo that we muſt conclude he was at too great a diſtance to be poſitive.

There are now more than one Thouſand of the Marines abroad, and I believe the reſt may appeal to any of the Admirals with whom they have ſerved, and find a different Character from our Authors, who is ſo palpably unacquainted with the men, tho ſo very angry with the Core.

That difficulty he raiſes of interfering with the Navy rules vaniſhes, when we ſhall appear uſeful for the Service, or elſe the Commiſſioner he is acquainted with, promiſes but poorly for the Capacities of the Board.

That the Marine Officers, debauch the principles of the Sea Officers, introducing Arts of falſe Muſtering, unknown to the priſtine Innocence of the Seamen, is a ſcandal ſo void of proof, that it is not yet known they were ever ſo much as accuſed; which requires all the Countenance of our Author to defend, becauſe the Marines on board, are always under the Muſter and Check of the Navy.

Where they are ſaid to be uſeful in the King's Yards, he tells us he will give no Anſwer, after he has ſaid all he could againſt it; which is a condeſcention we muſt always own, and come to our old way of anſwering with Matter of Fact of the moſt evident kind.

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In the year 1694, great part of the Marine Regiments were on ſhore, and were Quartered according to the Eſtabliſhment near the Dock Yards, and there Employ'd with the Encouragement of Sixpence *per* day, the common Labourers receiving conſtantly One Shilling and Two pence, and the Marines were acknowledged by the Officers in the Yard, to diſpatch more Work for their number, than a third more of the Common Labourers, being generally young and able for the Service; and in ſix months time many of them arrived to perform the ſame work the Artificers were allow'd two Shillings *per* day for.

As for the ſecurity of the Yards that he diſpiſes, and ſets up a Watchman and a Bell, and the whole's confuted: But the Marines, ſo quartered as before, may take off the charge of one Shilling and Sixpence a night *per* man paid to the Watch, and do the Purpoſe better; For the Soldier does it as a piece of his Duty, and is diligent in hopes of favour and perferment.

OurAuthor has taken great care to be particular in the Marines Diet and Lodging, and other accommodations; I hope, having as many Limbs as other men, the Advantage of that will be found in their labour.

When Ships are laid up, 'tis undeniable but the Marines muſt be an eaſier charge than Seamen, to do the duty on board, and in caſe of any attack, be unqueſtionably better able to defend, than a Boatſwain and a few Seamen unarmed, and without diſcipline.

Such a Force, tho below the Ridicule of our Author, might poſſibly have prevented the burning of the Ships at *Chattam*, and better defended the yards; for I have heard it affirm'd upon the place, that at that time, the Seamen and Labourers, before one of the Enemy Landed, inſtead of defending their Charge, plunder'd and ſtole what they could, and made the beſt of their way: To what purpoſe the ringing of the Bell might have been I know not, But of this I am aſſured, no Souldier dare conceal himſelf when the Drum beats to Arms.

Where any neceſſity ariſes of ſpeedy rigging of Ships ordered out, The Marines Quarter'd near the Docks will be Qualified for that Duty, prevent any delay while the means are uſed to get the Seamen together, and in the year (1695) for want of Seamen at hand, many of the great Ships at *Chattam* were fitted out, and carried down the River by Marines.

The Firſt Marine Regiments are not diſpers'd as he falſly affirms, but one of the preſent four conſiſts of the old Officers and choſen men, and the reſt were diſtributed into the other three; ſo that the diſpute is not to make a new Eſtabliſhment, but upon theſe undeniable uſes to confirm an old one.

How it may anſwer this Gentlemans purpoſe, or his Character to lay the ſtricteſt aſſurance upon things utterly falſe, I can't tell; But this news from *Holland* of their laying aſide Marine Regiments wants confirmation.

When this Author had rank'd us under the Protection of the Admiralty, I was in hopes to have ſeen ſome of that regard due to a ſuperiour Board; But he is now in his Reforming Capacity, and muſt be allowed any Latitude.

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If continuing ſuch a neceſſary part of our Naval Force be deſtructive of the Kingdoms Liberties, our Author has found out a new way of preſerving them unknown to our Anceſtors, and I hope he will be convinced we are not to be deceived by appearances, how ſecure ſoever he may be of his own diſguiſe.

His Malice is every where apparent as his Vanity, which makes his Opinion of leſs Force againſt us, if there were any thing in his Arguments, and I believe if we were acquainted with his honeſty we might lay aſide all our Fears.

The End.